

Gavi Steinlauf & Maayan Berkowitz

Security Council: Topic #2 - The Treatment of Uyghurs in China

YUNMUN XXXVI

Human rights remain one of the most contentious issues in international relations, and the treatment of the Uyghur population in China's Xinjiang region has drawn global attention. The Uyghurs, a predominantly Muslim, Turkic-speaking minority, have faced reports of mass detentions, forced labor, strict surveillance, and limitations on religious and cultural practices.¹ Some governments and human rights organizations describe these allegations as amounting to crimes against humanity and genocide.²

Reports on this crisis give evidence of major human rights violations. These allegations include unlawful killings, torture, unexplained disappearances, sexual violence, forced labor, and coerced medical or psychological treatments. Reports suggest that over one million Uyghurs and members of other Muslim minorities have been enduring this treatment since 2017.³

The People's Republic of China, however, rejects these accusations, maintaining that its policies are aimed at combating extremism and terrorism,⁴ and that "vocational training" achieves this goal.⁵ China claimed that Uyghurs were being sent to "re-education camps" where they were provided education and employment opportunities. Despite claiming that re-education camps were closed in 2019, the ill treatment of the Uyghur people has persisted.⁶ This stark divide in interpreting China's actions has fueled sharp tensions in the international community. The issue also intersects with broader geopolitical considerations, including trade relationships, global supply chains, and the strategic rivalry between major powers.

The Security Council faces an exceptionally difficult task with this topic. On the one hand, the UN has a responsibility to protect fundamental human rights and to uphold international law. On the other hand, China is a permanent member of the Security Council with

¹ <https://www.cfr.org/background/china-xinjiang-uyghurs-muslims-repression-genocide-human-rights>

² <https://jeres.elliott.gwu.edu/project/chinas-genocide-against-uyghurs/>

³ https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/624521_CHINA-2024-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/08/un-human-rights-office-issues-assessment-human-rights-concerns-xinjiang>

⁵ <https://www.state.gov/forced-labor-in-chinas-xinjiang-region>

⁶ <https://www.cfr.org/background/china-xinjiang-uyghurs-muslims-repression-genocide-human-rights>

veto power, complicating efforts to take collective action. The situation raises questions of sovereignty, the limits of international intervention, and the ability of the Council to address alleged abuses by one of its most powerful members.

Some questions to consider:

1. How should the Security Council respond to allegations of human rights abuses by one of its permanent members?
2. What role, if any, should international investigations or monitoring missions play in Xinjiang?
3. How can the Council promote accountability while preserving its credibility and functionality?
4. Should economic sanctions or other diplomatic tools be considered, and what are their potential consequences?

Keep in mind that your task is to represent the official position of your country, not your personal views. As always, ensure that you are citing reliable sources in your papers. YUNMUN maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism and AI, and all papers will be reviewed through Turnitin.

We look forward to a substantive and thoughtful debate as we work together to address one of the most pressing human rights challenges of our time. Do not hesitate to reach out with questions leading up to the conference.

Gavi Steinlauf – gsteinla@mail.yu.edu

Maayan Berkowitz – mberkow4@mail.yu.edu

Best,

Gavi Steinlauf & Maayan Berkowitz

Chairs, Security Council

YUNMUN XXXVI